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ABSTRACT

To investigate whether students taking the same courses in different high schools receive comparable instruction, research was conducted in sophomore, college-preparatory classrooms in two schools (one upper middle class and suburban, the other working class and inner-city) in one California school district. At the upper middle class school, it was found, the curriculum emphasized: (1) facts and skills that could be learned as "rules"; (2) technical knowledge (i.e., computers, mathematics, sciences), and (3) planning ahead. The curriculum at the working class school emphasized understanding the "basic idea" and forming personal opinions and responses. Cultural reproduction theory, when applied to these findings, suggests that the knowledge offered to the upper middle class students is the very knowledge that is most valued by society, while the working class school was at a disadvantage because its curriculum, although challenging, was not in line with current thinking about what skills are needed for college. Moreover, the working class students were not exposed to achievement-oriented values as the upper middle class students were. It appears that "standardizing" a curriculum does not guarantee equity: equal learning opportunities may at first appear to be largely determined by the content of the curriculum; actually they are closely linked to how the curriculum is organized and presented on a daily basis. (KH)

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THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY CURRICULUM AT TWO HIGH SCHOOLS IN ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The College Preparatory Curriculum at Two High Schools in One School District

Abstract

This study investigates whether students taking the same courses in different high schools receive comparable instruction. The purpose of the research is to describe, interpret, and appraise the classroom instructional opportunities offered to students enrolled in one curriculum track, but attending different high schools. The study contrasts the instruction offered college bound sophomores in two high schools with different socioeconomic and ethnic composition in one school district. Cutural reproduction theory which implies that the differences in socioeconomic composition of the schools will result in the students having qualitatively different educational experiences was used interpret the findings.

The Problem

"Tracking," an organizational strategy for meeting the needs of a diverse student population is well entrenched in American high schools. The major focus of classroom studies concerned with tracking has been on the differentiation that exists between tracks. Studies of tracking have documented ways in which students in different curriculum tracks have qualitatively different educational experiences (Swartz, 1981; Oakes, 1982). Because track levels are largely reflective of racial and socioeconomic differences among students, curricular differences between tracks imply differences in the learning opportunities which students from different racial and socioeconomic groups receive in schools.

Most studies of tracking have suggested great curricular similarity from school to school within the same track. The result of comparing track levels has been a rather glowing picture of the classroom experiences of students in the college preparatory track. (Goodlad, 1984; Morgan, 1977; Oakes, 1982). The learning opportunities available to students in college preparatory classes have emerged as being more intellectually stimulating and demanding of self-initiative than other curricular tracks. Higher expectations and more frequent homework assignments have been found to be given to higher track classes.

Research studies have not paid attention to the variation in opportunities for learning that may exist within one curriculum track across schools. Goodlad (1983) points out that while the struggle for equal access to schools is not yet completely behind us, the more compelling issue related to equal educational opportunity in the 1980's and 1990's is the extent to which access to knowledge is distributed equitably in the schools.

The curriculum has a large role in defining what constitutes knowledge. Cultural reproduction theorists (e.g., Young, 1971; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Apple, 1978) suggest that there are subtle connections between the knowledge or "cultural capital" offered to students and the social and economic outcomes of the institution. These theorists assert that some groups have access to more power in our society not simply because they have an economic advantage, but also as a direct result of the kinds of knowledge available to them and not to others. To understand why particular groups of people typically succeed academically while others generally do not, we must gain a better

understanding of what kinds of knowledge are differentially distributed in schools.

Recently there has been a surge of interest in the academic curriculum. Researchers have advocated that more students take more college preparatory classes and that more homework be assigned. Before making curricular changes that may simply impress the public on paper, it would be wise to take a closer look at the educational experiences of students who are already enrolled in the most academic classes available to them. We need to know about the nature of the operational curriculum that is presented to students taking the same courses at different high schools.

This study investigates the complex question of whether students enrolled in the college preparatory track at different high schools have access to similar types of knowledge. The research goes beyond previous studies which either compared content and instructional methods across curriculum tracks within schools or focused on quantitative measures of course offerings or attendance records without looking inside classrooms. It compares the substance of the college preparatory curriculum offered to sophomore students attending two high schools with different socioeconomic and ethnic composition in one school district.

Methods

The general research model used in this investigation is the comparative case study, combined with ethnographic data collection and educational criticism techniques. The study steps over the boundaries of traditional ethnographic studies in that in addition to describing classroom life, it draws upon cultural reproduction theory to interpret major features of the data and appraise the events and processes described. In order to compare the two schools, variation in site selection was maximized and variation in case selection was minimized.

To provide a detailed picture of the teaching styles and content offered college bound sophomores, data collection focused on a small sample of classes and students. Three classes were observed in each of two high schools at least twelve times between October 1982 and May 1983. English, geometry, and social studies backed with drivers education were selected to represent the typical college preparatory curriculum which sophomores in California take. In each school the one honor's class available to sophomores was selected. The other classes observed were those having the largest number of students from the honor's class.

Five students who attended at least two of the three classes were chosen from each school for more intensive observations and interviews throughout the school year. These students were selected randomly in the sense that they were selected on the basis of their class schedule, rather than by individual characteristics.

Classroom activities related to academic work were the

main focus of the observations. The nature and length of the tasks assigned, the types of questions asked by both the teachers and the students, and what the identified students and teacher did during class were noted. To provide a context for interpreting the observations, teachers, students, and administrators in each school were interviewed.

The first goal of the data analysis was to provide an accurate picture of the college preparatory curriculum at the two high schools. Cultural reproduction theory was then used to interpret the findings.

Background: The High Schools and the Students

Data were collected in two high schools purposefully selected from seven high schools in one large urban school district. One high school, ten miles from the urban center, represents upper middle class suburbia. Camden High School was established in 1967 and is located in a semi-rural area composed of many tract housing developments ten miles from the city. Ninety-one percent of the people who have moved to this community are white and many are employed by electronics corporations in white-collar professions such as engineering or upper level management.

The instructional program at Camden is geared primarily to college bound students with high aspirations for future careers. High scores on advanced placement, national merit, and standardized placement tests, along with winning athletic teams

have enhanced community support for the school. While enrollment in the school district declines, enrollment at Camden has stayed the same or grown.

The other high school, Rosemead, was established in 1867. It represents the inner city. Although not considered a ghetto area, the greatest proportion of the housing in the area provides some of the cheapest housing available in the city. The parents have a range of occupations with the greatest majority classified as blue collar. During recent years the area has been experiencing a growth of minority populations, with the greatest majority being Hispanic and Pacific Asian Islander. In December 1982. 59% of the students attending Rosemead were Hispanic, 21% were Pacific Asian Islander, and 15% were white.

Rosemead High School serves a very mobile population, with a gradually declining population in each successive grade. Many of the students speak little or no English and are deficient in basic reading and math skills. For the last three years it has had the lowest scores in the district on the state achievement tests. To add to its difficulties the school is located in an area in which there is a high incidence of vandalism.

While Rosemead High is disadvantaged when compared with schools in wealthier neighborhoods, it still has a responsibility to serve a small population of bright, motivated students who can be expected to go on to four year colleges and seek white collar professions. In fact, the past few years have seen an increase in the number of students pursuing further education after high school. From the most recent senior class of about two hundred students, approximately ten students went on to a well known four

year college or university. The school is proud that many of the best students continually receive scholarship money. This study concentrates on learning more about the classroom experiences offered those students who plan to pursue a four year college after high school.

Five students who attended at least two of the three class periods observed were chosen for intensive observation and interview at each school. The five students (three boys, two girls) chosen at Camden High were upper middle class white students. Only one student attended the same three classes I did, but several students in the classes had the same teachers different periods of the day. All the students chosen had qualified for the gifted program (except for one who had not yet been tested), and had each passed the high school minimum competency exams.

At Rosemead High it was much easier to find several students attending three classes together because students taking the most academic classes available composed a small group who had fewer choices of classes. There were five boys who attended all the classes I had selected, and there were three other students who attended two of the three classes and had the third teacher a different period. Six students were chosen for intensive observation and interview at Rosemead. They were all in the gifted program (except for two who had not yet been tested), and had each passed the high school minimum competency exams. Four of the students were born in the United States, one in Mexico, and the other in Vietnam. Five of the six students were bilingual.

Specific Findings

Different types of findings have emerged from this study. This first group of findings provide information about the college preparatory curriculum offered at each school. The relationship between the content and tasks offered to the students, the instructional practices, and the values being transmitted were investigated in four classes at each school. Several differences in the classroom learning experiences available to the students emerged.

This study revealed significant differences in curricular content and instructional practices in one curriculum track across two schools in one school district.

Differences in Curriculum Content: English and Social Studies

All of the students in the study were taking the highest track classes available to them during their sophomore year of high school. The explicit curriculum was significantly different in both the English and social studies classes observed at the two schools. At the working class school, the students were expected to develop a broad knowledge and appreciation of American Literature in their honors English class. Through class discussions and writing assignments, the curriculum stressed creativity, critical thinking, independence, and self-expression. Basic skills involved in grammar, syntax, spelling, and vocabulary were not directly taught to the students on a regular basis.

At the upper middle class school, the English teacher's

major concern was to develop writing, reading, and grammar skills at a relatively concrete level. The vocabulary program emphasized Greek and Latin roots; regular class time was spent on learning rules related to grammer, syntax, and punctuation; the reading units concentrated on literary terms and facts about the stories. Even the emphasis on writing was on the development of technique, rather than creative expression.

The students at the two high schools did not receive a standardized curriculum in social studies either. One school offered sophomores an honors class in social studies, while the other school did not. At the upper middle class school the curriculum focused on classical historical content (European History), and included a heavy emphasis on library research skills. The students were provided with several "rules" to follow in taking notes on lectures and in writing term papers. In contrast, the explicit curriculum at the working class school focused on law and the individual, and developed from a curriculum designed to prevent delinquency. Unlike the information presented at Camden, it did not include information one might encounter in a college class. This is not really surprising since only a small percentage of the students attending this class were taking a college preparatory curriculum.

Not surprisingly, the students in the honors classes at both schools appeared to have more assigned work to do independently. The students at the working class school were asked to read four novels in honors English, while the students at the upper middle class school were asked to read only two. The students in honors

social studies were asked to write a term paper, while the students in regular social studies were not.

The types of writing assignments differed in the English classes. Generally, the writing assignments at the upper middle class school were more focused than those at the working class school. For example, the students at Rosemead were expected to write a general report on each book they had read at home, while the students at Camden were asked to write one paragraph on an assigned aspect of their books.

The curriculum at the upper middle class school had more structure and regularity built into it. There was a weekly vocabulary test in English and a weekly identification assignment in social studies. Although the social studies and English classes at the working class school had units of study, they did not have the regular weekly schedule of activities that was apparent at upper middle class school.

Although both social studies classes were teacher directed and included lectures, the lectures at the upper middle class school were more formalized and lengthy. While both classes encouraged the students to participate in discussions, exactly what was encouraged differed. At the working class school the students were asked to take a stand on controversial issues. In contrast, the students at Camden were encouraged to become familiar with particular events and analyze <u>why</u> they happened historically in the way they did. Similarly, the writing assignments emphasized different things. At the working class school, the papers were to include certain facts discussed in

class and the students were often asked to suggest ways in which a particular social service could be improved. There was clearly more research emphasis in the social studies class at the upper middle class school. For example, the number of references used and the proper use of footnotes affected the students' grades.

The Same Explict Curriculum: Geometry and Drivers Education

The explicit curriculum in the geometry and the drivers education classes was standardized across the district in terms of the topics that were to be included. Both the district guides and the student transcripts would suggest that the students at both schools had taken identical courses, yet the operational curriculum at the two schools was quite different.

The most apparent differences in the geometry classes was strongly affected by the fact that they used different textbooks. A careful review of both textbooks revealed that similiar topics were covered in both. While the students all started in the Fall covering the same content, by Spring the class at the upper middle class school was not only ahead in terms of topics covered, but also the information presented in the textbook had been covered more thoroughly. One of the major decisions that affected the learning opportunities in the Geometry classes was which problems the teachers chose to assign. At the upper middle class school, the teacher used the fastest pace suggested by the book. In contrast, the assignments at the working class school repeatedly show only the first few problems assigned in each chapter. There were significant differences in the geometry texts used at the two schools. Consequently, the students at the

upper middle class school were slowly led through each new concept with easy questions first before trying to tackle a proof, while the students at the working class school were usually asked to attempt to solve simple proofs using the concept immediately.

Like geometry, the topics intended to be covered in the two drivers education classes at the two schools were identical. What appeared to make these two classes different from one another were two completely different styles of pedagogy and different class composition. The procedures used by the driver education teachers at both schools were in many ways the antithesis of what the students encountered in their other classes. At the upper middle class school, the drivers education class had a relaxed atmosphere and little assigned homework. In contrast, the drivers education class at the working class school had rigid requirements for both work and conduct. The students typically had a quiz each day followed by three activities, and homework every night. Although the students at both schools were asked to answer questions at the end of the chapters in the book, only the students at the upper middle class school were encouraged to question the validity of the data presented in the book and discuss its implications. Few discussions occured in this class at the working class school.

The emphasis on attending college was greater for the students at the upper middle class school than it was for the students at the working class school.

The implicit message delivered through the curriculum at the upper middle class school was that preparing for college was the most important function of the high school curriculum. This message was very consistent from class to class. All of the teachers observed at the upper middle class school repeatedly tied present activities to the future and specifically to how they would provide the students with the skills needed in college. In preparing the students for the future both teachers and parents transmitted values and attitudes which affected the curriculum that was offerd to the students. At the upper middle class school the curriculum emphasized learning specific skills and study habits that would be useful on college entrance exams and in completing the work assigned at college.

The teachers at the working class school did not place the same emphasis on preparation for college entrance exams and the development of particular study habits that the teachers at the upper middle class school did. For example, at the upper middle class school during the fifteen classroom visits made for this study, the SAT was mentioned two times in English and four times in Geometry. The teachers often specifically reminded the students how the activities they were doing in class would be useful on the future exams. The English teacher made comments such as "The kinds of problems we are working on are the very kind found on the SAT..." and the geometry teacher repeatedly

pointed out specific topics covered in the textbook which usually appeared on the SAT. In contrast, there was never any specific mention of the SAT in any of the classes visited at the working class school.

"Honors" classes were quite popular with the parents at the upper middle class school. The history honors class was so popular that it had been expanded to two periods, and some members of the upper middle class community were upset that honors English was no longer offered to sophomore students. Many teachers feared the keen interest in honors classes was primarily because "it looks good on a students' application to college."

The image of the students in relation to their future potential portrayed by the teachers at the working class school varied considerably. Consequently, both the explicit and implicit expectations of the students varied tremendously from class to class. College was mentioned regularly by only one of the teachers observed at the working class school. While she did consciously try to prepare the students for college, seldom did she associate the need for preparation with a need to learn specific skills and study habits. Rather, her emphasis was on enriching the students' backgrounds by exposing them to great literature and literary analysis. When she mentioned the future, it was to make sure that the students knew that attending a well-known university was indeed a viable option for them. In contrast, the content and focus of the social studies class was on delinquency prevention. The teacher commented to me that he doubted that many of these students would go on to college.

There was more concern at the upper middle class school for the development of measurable skills in comparison with the working class school.

At the upper middle class school the curriculum in each class encouraged the students to learn particular, measurable skills. These skills were measured on a regular basis by paper and pencil tests and every teacher observed used a point system upon which to base grades. While the students at the working class school were also encouraged to learn particular skills, the same emphasis on measurable skills was not as prevalent. Differences between the schools existed in the regular testing of vocabulary words in both English and social studies at the upper middle class school; in a particular way of organizing one's writing which was taught at the upper middle class school; and in the fact that the students spent less time solving proofs and more time using a particular concept to solve concrete problems in geometry at the upper middle class school.

Criteria for successfully completing an assignment were more clearly specified at the upper middle class school.

Specifications for work were quite specific for the student notebooks in math, for writing assignments in English, and for the research papers in social studies at the upper middle class school. Not only were the exact due dates and the consequences for turning work in late emphasized and reemphasized, but the explicit format of presentation was explained by most teachers.

In both English and geometry at the working class school, there was no discussion of expected format for homework

and due dates were often extended. As a result, papers written for English and social studies at the working class school varied immensely from individual to individual, while they were more standardized at the upper middle class school. More homework assignments were also turned in late or not done at all in three of the four classes at the working class school.

Teachers and parents at the upper middle class school displayed an attitude of "protection" toward the students in terms of seeing to it that they succeeded in school. This attitude was not observed to the same extent at the working class school.

The students at both schools were expected to show some self-motivation in terms of working on their own and managing their own time. Assignments were followed up in different ways at the two schools though. A higher frequency of reminders to complete assignments and more frequent discussions about the importance of completing one's work were both observed and reported by the students at the upper middle class school. Consequently, the students at the working class school were more on their own in terms of disciplining themselves to complete assignments.

The working class students also appeared to have to take on more responsibility for solving their own problems related to academic work. When I followed up particular problems the students at the working class school were having in getting their work done, the attitude displayed by teachers and administrators was one of it being "their" (i.e., the students') problem. No one seemed to be watching out for the students at the working class school in the way that the students at the upper middle

class school appeared to be protected against failure. A consequence of this difference in attitude was that more self-initiative and responsibility appeared to be required to succeed academically at the working class school than at the upper middle class school.

General Findings

The above findings concretely describe how different types of knowledge, skills, and values were emphasized in the curriculum at the two schools. They help to define what kinds of knowledge schools appear to differentially distribute to students taking a college preparatory curriculum. The next group of findings use theories of cultural reproduction to discuss the implications of the differences in the learning opportunities observed at the two schools. Cultural reproduction theory suggests that there are subtle connections between the form and content of the curriculum offered in schools and the social and economic outcomes of the institution. The following findings provide support for cultural reproduction theory and help identify what types of things we should pay attention to in order to ensure equal learning opportunities to all students enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum track.

High status knowledge in high school is the knowledge which is needed fo college acceptance.

According to cultural reproduction theory, schools play a role in defining particular forms of knowledge as being more

valuable than other types of knowledge. "High status knowledge" in our society is the knowledge emphasized at upper middle class schools.

This study found that at the upper middle class school learning opportunities emphasized:

1. Facts and skills which could be learned as "rules"
2. Technical knowledge (i.e. computers, mathematics, sciences)
3. Planning ahead.

In contrast, at the working class school the learning opportunities presented to the students emphasized:

1. Understanding the "basic idea"
2. Forming personal opinions and responses

At first these findings appear to be the antithesis of what we might expect. With the use of cultural reproduction theory they become more understandable. The students observed at the working class school seemed to be encouraged more often than the students at the upper middle class school to use higher levels of thinking. Cultural reproduction theory suggests that the knowledge which is offered to the upper middle class students is the very knowledge that is considered to be most valuable by society. Keeping in mind that the students in the classes observed were supposed to be taking courses which prepared them for college, clearly the college preparatory track at the upper middle class school had a very instrumental orientation. The curricular activities presented in each class such as library research, vocabulary tests, and writing exercises were intended to ensure that the students would have the skills needed to achieve in college. The students were receiving opportunities to learn the types of knowledge which the upper middle class

currently perceives as being essential for college. The students were also socialized to look ahead toward meeting particular goals which related to being accepted to college and were frequently reminded of how the future related to present actions.

The high school having the working class population in this study appeared to be at a disadvantage in preparing students for success in college because the curriculum it offered was not in line with current thinking about what skills are needed for college. The content of both the English and social studies classes offered resembled "elective" courses, popular in the late '60s and early '70s. The more traditional basic skills emphasis which is popular today was not offered to these students. The implication is that the students at the working class school were not receiving opportunities to learn the types of "high status" knowledge expected for college entrance today.

Access to knowledge is not enough to ensure equity. While equal learning opportunities may at first appear to be largely determined by the content of the curriculum, actually they are closely linked to how the curriculum is organized and presented to the students on a daily basis.

It is in the interplay between the content of the curriculum, pedagogy, and the values transmitted in the classroom that we can see how schools seem to contribute to inequality outside the institution of the school. An outstanding feature of the contrast in educational experiences which the students at the two schools received was the difference in the consistency of message regarding what was important both within and across classes. The values which the teachers at the upper middle class

school communicated through their organization and emphasis on particular features of the curriculum created a pattern or "ethos" (Rutter, 1979) which permeated the curriculum across classes. The consistency in values transmitted in different classes served to fuse the learning opportunities the students at the upper middle class school received.

The teachers at the upper middle class school were familiar with the homogenous values of the community and knew that academic success was a top priority. Consequently, values associated with academic achievement (i.e., earning high grades) were consistently emphasized in all of the classes observed at the upper middle class school. The following practices observed more at the upper middle class school than at the working class school imply certain values associated with preparation for college:

1. An emphasis on tests.
2. An emphasis on attaining skills through mastering small sections at a time in the form of "rules".
3. Rewards given for exhibiting behaviors expected in college (e.g., bringing own supplies to class, being attentive).
4. Technical criteria used to grade assignments (e.g., number of references used, levels in writing).
5. Planning ahead in order to make sure one gets assignments completed on time.

Both teachers and parents at the upper middle class school felt that it was their responsibility to continually see to it that each student did everything possible to make acceptance at college a liklihood. Accordingly, they took actions which

gradually served to develop an internalized set of middle class values in the students which were similiar to their own values. A consistency in pattern seen both within and across classes appeared to help create clarity of purpose for the students attending the upper middle class school.

In contrast, the message deliverd to the students at the working class school was not nearly as consistent, even for those students enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum. The working class students in this study did not appear to get the same dose of achievement oriented values which the upper middle class students did. There was more variety in the classroom experiences of the students taking the highest track classes available to them at the working class school. Consequently, these students appeared to be at a disadvantage in receiving learning opportunities related to preparation for college which were as consistent with the way of life promoted at the upper middle class school.

No one seemed to be looking out for the students at the working class school in the way that the students were protected at the upper middle class school. The students from working class families appeared to be very much on their own when it came to showing the internal motivation necessary to complete assignments and solve other academically related problems.

Ideologies That Structure the College Preparatory Curriculum

Cultural reproduction thoery was useful in suggesting ways in which schools play a role in reproducing inequality in society, but it is sketchy in showing specifically how this happens. This study contributes to our understanding of the "how" by examining the daily operations of the curriculum and suggesting what classroom practices differentiated the educational experiences of two groups of students enrolled in one curriculum track.

Willis (1977) asserts that ther are contradictions and competing ideologies that structure daily classroom experiences. This study found that there were costs and trade-offs in the "college preparatory" curriclum offered to the students at both schols. At the working class school the paradoxes of a "college prepparatory" curriculum were most clearly manifest in a curriculum that seemed like a residue from the '60s and '70s when "elective" courses were popular. The students at the working class school were offered elective type courses in both English and in social studies which encouraged the use of higher order thinking skills and self-initiative. These classes did not spend as much time teaching basic skills needed for writing and research. The result was that while the working class students observed though they were being prepared for college, the curriculum they received may leave them at a disadvantage when it comes to displaying the knowledge and skills currently expected.

At the upper middle class school the paradox in the knowledge offered to the students is apparent when one questions

what the students were really being prepared for--success in college or success at being a student. While the education offered at the upper middle class school was certainly academic, it is questionable how intellectual it was. There were many trade-offs to the "academic" curriculum which these students received. The students received clarity of expectations but there was little space for self-initiative. The students were exposed to a full curriculum, but it left little time for spontaneous lessons. The students were protected from failure, but they had little opportunity to think about why they were working so diligently.

The students at both high schools were taking a "college preparatory" curriculum, but they were being prepared for college in very different ways. The curriculum that was offered to these students is likely to continue to reproduce inequity in our society because in unintended ways it is ensuring that the upper middle class students will be accepted and succeed at the most prestigious colleges, while the working class students will not. The paradox is that while the upper middle class students may be the ones likely to maintain their economic and social advantage, this study found little in their classroom experiences to encourage the problem-solving skills and self-initiative needed in professional positions.

Research using cultural reproduction theory has implied an ideological framework, yet has not included a value structure by which to measure it. Utilization of this theory leads one to expect to find quality education being delivered to the upper

middle class. This study suggests that while more affluent people in our society may indeed have more access to the cultural capital needed to ensure their privileged place in society, the question still remains as to whether the education they currently receive is really representative of upper middle class ideology.

This study has illuminated ways in which schools may fail to provide educational equality for poor and minority children enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum. The differences in curricular content and instructional practices that were seen in one curriculum track across two schools suggest that studies lumping the nature of the college preparatory curriculum into one unit are too simplistic. The fact that the two schools observed were in one school district makes the differences observed even more significant. If such blatent differences exist in the college preparatory curriculum in just one school district, it seems likely that significant differences exist in this track across school districts. The findings of this study suggest that investigations of learning opportunities should look not only beyond the names of the classes in which students have enrolled, but also beyond the explicit instructional objectives for each class.

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